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'Amazing salary' on Viet job

CPYRGHT

Colonel talks

"After the Americans approached me to do the job, I was amazed at the salary they offered. I can't disclose it, but the money is enormous by Australian standards."

Colonel Warfe and Major Fred Lomas have been engaged by the U.S. Operations Mission.

"I would rather, anytime, to be working with Australian units," Colonel Warfe said.

"But short of mobilisation, there is little chance of a man of my age and rank being called from the reserve into service."

"Until a year ago, I was colonel in charge of the CMF Royal Victorian Regiment. Then they split the regiment into three parts, with lieutenant-colonel the most senior rank. I was automatically put on the reserve list."

PAVED WAY

"Then the Americans started approaching me to work for them."

Colonel Ted Serong, a top Australian jungle fighting expert now working with the Americans in Vietnam, helped to pave the way on an official level.

Colonel Warfe said: "The Americans have got problems in Vietnam and the war there is of vital importance to us as a free country. I had to go."

Colonel Warfe said many people came back from Vietnam saying the American soldiers there were not as good as the Australians.

'SUPERB'

"It is an unfair comparison. Our men there are a well-trained professional unit. 'Superb' is the only way to describe them as jungle fighters."

"The Americans are a much bigger fighting force, given quite different basic training from our men. The South Vietnamese army is in a similar position."

"The American soldier's basic training consists of a series of specialised courses. Often he meets his officers and commanders, who have been put through similar courses, only on the eve of battle."

"Our system, based on the British Army's centuries-old training scheme, is to train the officers and let them train the men—and win their confidence. This seems more suitable for jungle warfare."

"We are going to start a jungle training school in Vietnam — partly for a 40,000 Vietnamese 'police' army which will move in and hold areas freed from the Viet Cong, and partly to train the regular Vietnamese and American troops."

The first thing he would do when he got to Vietnam was "put a pack on my back and a rifle over my shoulder and move in to the jungle. When I've found out exactly what the conditions are like, I'll be able to organise a training program."

Colonel Warfe did not know exactly what his status would be in Vietnam.

"I understand I will wear Vietnamese army

clothes and be treated by the Americans as a brigadier and by the Vietnamese as a brigadier-general."

Col. Warfe in the Second World War fought as a lieutenant in the North Africa desert, Greece, and Syria.

In 1943, as a major, he led a commando company in New Guinea. For leading 300 commandos over the Kuper Range and driving back the Japanese, he won the M.C.

In 1944, he was mentioned twice in despatches and, in — won the DSO as a lieutenant-colonel for leading 2-24th battalion in the capture of Tarakan airfield.

He resigned after the war but re-enlisted in 1950 to take command of 15th National Service battalion at Puckapunyal. In 1954, he opened the Camungra jungle training centre, planned its syllabus and was chief instructor.

AT RABAU

Major Lomas fought with the infantry at Rabaul early in the war. From 1943 to 1945 he led the 2-7th commando in actions throughout New Guinea.

He won the Military Cross in May 1943 for leading his company in a successful attack on Sauri village in the Wewak area.

The village was heavily defended by the Japanese and commandos captured it after a long forced march through the jungle.

Major Lomas left the army in 1949, but returned in 1956 as an instructor at the Camungra under Col. Warfe.